



Town Forest Committee

Town of Hinesburg
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Meeting Minutes – November 9, 2017

- Approved 12/14/17 -

Present: Pat Mainer (Chair), Brent Francis, Julie Gruenholz, Corinne Johansson, Stewart Pierson, Steve Russel, Aaron Townsend

Absent: Kevin Hans, Chris Haviland

Guests: Mike Bissonette from Hinesburg Conservation Committee

Call to Order

Pat called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. on November 9, 2017.

Additions/Deletions to Agenda

There were none.

Public Comment

Mike Bissonette from the Hinesburg Conservation Committee came as a representative of that committee. The Conservation Committee is reaching out to all of the Hinesburg Town committees seeking their support to hire a part-time employee to work with the Hinesburg Town Administrator. This employee described as community support personnel would be employed by the town of Hinesburg to coordinate various responsibilities for all Town of Hinesburg committees such as recording minutes, posting agendas, and possibly helping with grant writing and permits. The focus of this position would be to serve the town committees.

Mike is asking for \$2,000.00 from each Hinesburg town committee. Members of the HTFC had questions and concerns such as the amount of money that Mike is requesting exceeds the current annual HTFC budget. HTFC members also raised concerns about paying an employee to do work that is currently done at no cost to taxpayers as it is done by volunteer effort.

Mike would like a decision about the HTFC's participation in this request by mid-December. The HTFC will discuss this issue further at the December HTFC meeting.

Discussion/Approval of October 12, 2017 Minutes

Brent had a question about the motions and vote concerning the Hunting Season Notices. The HTFC members present recalled that the motion had been approved unanimously at the October HTFC meeting. Corinne will ask Chris to review the October 2017 minutes and make the necessary correction to include the motions on the matter and the resulting vote. Stewart moved to approve the October

12, 2017 minutes to include the above mentioned correction. Steve seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report

There appears to be ongoing confusion about the various HTFC accounts. Suggestions were made for the sake of consistency and clarity that the HTFC and the Hinesburg Town office use the same names when referring to the HTF accounts. Brent and Pat will communicate with Missy Ross, Hinesburg Town Clerk, to clear up the current confusion and to indicate the HTFC's intent to, 1) Use as much of the Kiosk Fund as possible and, 2) To maintain a reserve account whenever possible.

No approval of the Treasurer's Report due to the current confusion.

Updates

- **Tree Planting on the LHTF Floodplain:** The tree planting in the LHT by the VYCC took place in late October 2017. The HTFC contribution of \$269.00 will be paid to VYCC after the HTFC financial situation has been clarified.
- **Boundary Marking:** There was nothing new to report about the boundary marking of the HTF. Some committee members felt that it is important to complete the boundary marking while the flagging installed by Harris Roen during the recent HTF inventory work was still intact. Steve mentioned that it may be a good idea to have someone from Vermont Family Forests Program do the boundary marking for the HTF. Steve will look into that and report back to the committee.
- **Tree Release:** There was some discussion about the work done by Jesse Labreque. Concerns were raised about an invasive species, a large buckthorn tree, being released and a question as to whether a specific landing should have been included in the clearing work. Overall, the committee felt satisfied with the work that was done. Pat reported that Jesse was paid for the work completed.
- **Signs:** There was nothing new to report about the signs. Brent thought the signs may arrive next week as per his conversation with Missy Ross, Town Clerk.
- **Hunting Season Notices:** Corinne posted signs at the Hayden Hill East and West kiosks and at the LHF kiosk before Youth Rifle weekend. Pat will post a sign at the Economou Road entrance before the start of regular Rifle season.
- **Webpage:** Pat reported that corrections for the HTFC were made to the Town of Hinesburg webpage.
- **Donation to FOTW:** Discussion about a HTFC donation to the Fellowship of the Wheel was postponed until the next HTFC Meeting.
- **Forest Inventory and Assessment by Harris Roen - Next Steps:**
 - **Presenting to the Community**
 - **Following through on Recommendations**HTFC members felt it is important to host a presentation to the community before asking the Select Board to approve the supplement created by the recent HTF inventory to the current

HTF Management Plan. Discussion ensued regarding the timing of the community forum. Members agreed that spring would be optimal, sometime after Town Meeting. Corinne offered to help organize this event. Pat will include further discussion of this matter in the March or April 2018 agenda.

New Business:

- **New Trail in LHTF:** Stewart reported that the potential new trail in the LHTF is not possible at this time. The abutting landowners will not grant permission to allow for a trail through their property.
- **Windstorm Damage in HTF and LHTF:** HTFC members noted that numerous trees were downed in the HTF and LHTF in the recent windstorm. Pat and Stewart reported that the Hinesburg Trails Committee is organizing a volunteer effort to clear and clean up trails affected by the recent windstorm. Pat indicated that FOTW may organize a volunteer effort as well.
- **Budget:** Renae Marshall, Hinesburg Town Administrator, would like to know the HTFC budget request for the next fiscal year. In the ensuing discussion some HTFC members expressed that although philosophically they felt that the HTF should be self-sustaining with no financial support from taxpayers, the timing was not right to expect this yet. With future logging operations in HTFC this may be possible, but since the logging may not take place until the winter of 2018-19, committee members felt it was prudent to request an annual HTFC budget for the upcoming year. The budget will be discussed in more detail at the December HTFC meeting.
- **Sugaring:** Brent indicated that the HTFC had asked Harris Roen to investigate the feasibility of a sugaring operation in the HTF. Aaron spoke about the possibility of generating income for the HTF through a sugaring operation based on his own informal assessment of a particular location of the HTF. Aaron also offered some approximate income figures that may be generated. Discussion ensued about possibly contracting this. More information is necessary. Pat will email Ethan Tapper, Chittenden County Forester, and Harris Roen to see if they can provide the HTFC with a cost analysis of income that could be generated from logging vs. sugaring in the HTF.
- **Annual Report:** The annual report for the Town of Hinesburg is due by December 15, 2017. Pat will complete the Annual Report.

Next Meeting

November 9, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the lower level conference room at the Hinesburg Town Hall.

Adjournment

Steve moved to adjourn the meeting. Corrine seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. Pat adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Corinne Johansson